

In the Claims

The following is a complete listing of the claims and replace all prior claims in the application:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method for forming a slider, comprising:
2 forming a slider body having a first side, a second side, a leading edge and a trailing
3 edge;
4 using at least a first etching to form an air bearing structure on the slider body ~~extending~~
5 ~~to the trailing edge~~ for providing a desired fly height, and
6 using a last etching to form a non-actuatable, wearable pad on the air bearing structure
7 ~~extending to~~ at the trailing edge, the wearable pad being formed around a transducer and
8 extending above the air bearing surface ~~and, the wearable pad~~ having a surface area of less than
9 5% of a total air bearing surface area and a predetermined height selected to be greater than or
10 equal to the desired fly height minus a disk roughness, wherein the wearable pad erodes during
11 use to produce a predetermined height so that wearing of the pad during use produces an
12 interference of zero at the desired fly height ~~and provides negligible lift to the slider.~~

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the using at least a first etching to form an air
2 bearing structure further comprises using two etching to form three surface levels.

1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein the using a last etching to form a non-actuatable,
2 wearable pad further comprises forming a fourth surface level.

1 4-5. (Canceled)

1 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising forming at least one front air bearing
2 pad.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising forming side rails extending along
2 sides of the support structure.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad is formed of a
2 material selected from the group comprising alumina, TiC/Al₂O₃ and silicon.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad comprises a
2 surface area of less than 3.5% of a total air bearing surface area.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad comprises a
2 surface area of less than 2% of a total air bearing surface area.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad comprises a
2 surface area of 1% of a total air bearing surface area.